

# DSA NEWS

Serving the Down syndrome community since 1996



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## Chairman's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

As the end of 2022 approaches, I would like to take a moment to recapitulate all your support over the past 12 months. The end of 2022 is a time to reflect as well as to celebrate.

Whilst 2022 presented different challenges and different highlights to each of us, I am encouraged by the life-changing moments that 2022

brought to our beneficiaries, their caregivers, and their families. Some of these are featured in our latest Newsletter.

To all the staff, volunteers, and supporters of DSA, you have been a blessing. I wish you a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Alex Yan**  
Chairman



## ED's Message

Dear Members,

2022 has been a defining year for DSA especially after Singapore transited from pandemic to endemic.

As the year draws to a close, I am pleased to inform that we have launched a new Early Start Program (ESP) for Infants and Toddlers which provides interim developmental solution for children awaiting admission into EIPIC services and enhanced our current Job Support curriculum into a Work Readiness Assisted Program (WRAP) to help our adult learners achieve better outcomes in their employment prospects. With your support, I have no doubt that our efforts will only accelerate in the coming year when

the right opportunities and support for our beneficiaries and their families come around.

I would like to sincerely thank all of you who have participated and engaged with our work, supported us, funded us, and inspired us. You have helped us to create the impact where it matters most. It is this that will drive us forward to face 2023 with renewed optimism and hope.

Let me take the opportunity to wish all of you a happier, healthier, and better New Year ahead!

**Yeo Ando**  
Executive Director



# 'Shine like Stars' at the Purple Parade 2022



For the first time, DSA participated in Purple Parade's contingent walk to show our support in celebrating abilities and promoting awareness for inclusivity! Leading up to the celebration, our members were hard at work creating props to the theme of 'Shine like Stars' with AES training officers. On 29 October 2022, close to 60 members, caregivers and staff decked in matching purple outfits and painted faces walked in solidarity with their eye-catching eco-friendly props.

We are incredibly proud of our members who braved through the thick crowd of participants

and marched from the start to the end. With their best smiles and enthusiasm put forth, the camera captured the memorable moment which won the hearts of voters and judges, and our contingent was ultimately conferred the winner of The Purple Parade 2022 Most Eco-friendly Contingent Award.

Hip hip hooray!

*Contributor: Shuhada Suhaimi, Senior Training Officer (Job Coach)*



Over 60 members, caregivers and staff participated in the contingent walk



Steffi helping to draw a star on Manpreet Kaur's face.



AEP learner Ben Yao creating the props for the walk.

## ITP Team attends ISEI Conference



After successfully integrating our learnings from the conference held in Sydney in 2019, the ITP team presented their research findings at the International Society on Early Intervention (ISEI) Conference held in Chicago from 27 September to 30 September 2022. The team shared how DSA's Infant Toddler Program was vital to the progress of Singapore's Early Intervention service landscape to over 1,500 delegates representing countries from across the globe.

The plenary talks followed by the parallel sessions were organised to ensure all participants had a fruitful and insightful experience. Whilst some sessions were more interactive than others, the event

presented us with the opportunity to network and find out more about on-going projects in other faculties or institutions and meet researchers, academics, and teachers from all around the world.

Attendees of our poster presentation were impressed by the level of collaboration and teamwork between the beneficiaries, the families and the ITP team. The team left Chicago inspired by the positive comments from the professors, doctors and researchers who attended our presentation.

*Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head, Children Education Services*

## APDSF AGM



DSA's Founding Chairman and Advisor Dr Balbir Singh and Ms Premalatha, Assistant Director of Services, represented DSA at the Asia Pacific Down Syndrome Federation (APDSF) AGM held in Chennai from 2 to 4 December 2022. Dr Balbir Singh was specially invited by DSA to be its medi-

cal representative for a Medical Interest Group meeting initiated by APDSF to support persons with Down syndrome in the region with medical assistance. Our Medical Advisor, Dr Bhavani Sri-ram is the chair of the medical committee.

During the AGM, the Roadmap for APDSF 2023-2026 was shared and Ms Prema presented the country report detailing the Association's initiatives and achievements to over 20 delegates from member countries.

*Contributor: Premalatha Parasuraman, Assistant Director, Services*



# Four Children graduate from ITP

Sometimes, even happy moments can bring us to tears because we are so invested in our ITP children's lives. We are proud to celebrate their achievements and are heartened to see them achieving each milestone.

We are passionate and committed to preparing our children for mainstream education, nurturing and supporting their growth and development with stimulating activities and experiences. Working alongside their families, we believe that every child matters and should be given the support and opportunities to realise their full potential.

Our joy is mixed with sadness as we bade good-bye to the children who graduated from our ITP this year. We will miss holding their little hands as we have been journeying alongside them since they took their first step.



From top left to right: Claire, Devika, Estelle, Fazlul

Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head, Children Education Services

## A Peek into IFSP



Elliot is currently in K1

Our students in the Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDC) enrolled in our programs when they were as young as 5 years old. Many of these ECDCs have been very welcoming and supportive to our students and IFSP teachers. We collaborate and work with the teachers and parents to come up with common goals addressing mastering essential skills. We focus on fine and

gross motor skills, self-adaptive skills, social skills and literacy and numeracy skills, and provide in-class support where we will be in the classroom with our students facilitating their daily tasks and maintaining their good behaviour during class time. We also engage in 1-to-1 intervention where we focus on developing and strengthening the essential skills across various domains. We break down tasks and concepts into doable steps for our students so that they can gradually progress. We acknowledge and celebrate small wins with our students so that they will enjoy the learning process.

Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head, Children Education Services

# Certified in Customer Service



14 learners from Adult Education Services (AES) who completed a 2-day workshop conducted by ITE College Central in July and September 2022 attained 'Certificate of Achievement in Customer Service'. The Vice-Principal of ITE visited our learners during the workshop and was impressed with their commitment and capabilities.

Our learners aced the workshop and assessment comprising discussions, sharing sessions, and role-play.

Some of the components that were covered in the workshop were:

- Outline good personal grooming techniques
- Create a professional image of the work environment
- Explain the value of good impression, to maintain good customer relations and teamwork

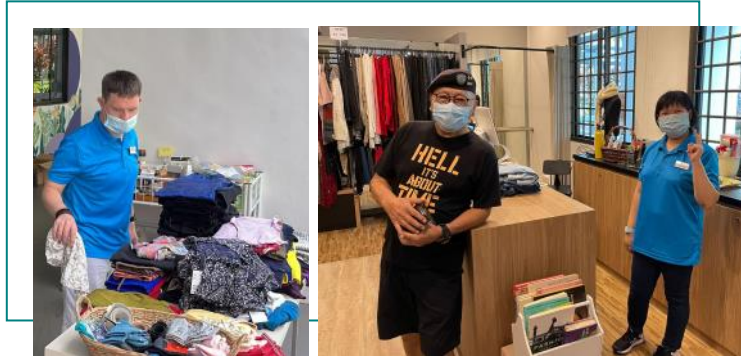
- Overcome challenges at work
- Display competence through role-playing

Our learners were very proud of their achievements after attending this workshop offered by an Institute of Higher Learning and upon attaining the qualification. ITE and AES will continue to collaborate on suitable courses for our adult learners in 2023 in the spirit of lifelong learning.

*Contributor: Catherine Michael, Head, Adult Enhancement Program*



## 'Taking Over' DSA Thrift Shop



John sets up the booth

Pei Yun serving a regular customer

ILT Centre has taken on the mantle of running DSA Thrift Shop this year, and the learners are eager and excited with their new roles and look forward to utilising the skills picked up through the customer service course at ITE, and photography course by Hatch; both of which were timely and useful.

The photography skills have come in handy for the listings on the Thrift Shop's Carousell account, while the customer service skills learned at ITE have been invaluable to the purpose-built retail outfit. Their eagerness to showcase their ability and contribute to society in a meaningful way makes running the thrift shop even more

rewarding. Their smiles and joyful attitudes are a delight to all their customers and have resulted in many repeat customers who come each week just to see them. This is the true meaning of community integration. When learners are involved in something whereby others in their community desire to participate alongside them and interact with them, we know they are on the right path.

"Won't you come and say hi to our ILT Centre learners on Thursdays? They would be thrilled to see you."

*Contributed by: Todd Simonson Michael, Head, Independent Living & Training Centre*

## ILT Centre Learners go Bowling



On 26 October 2022, learners from the ILT Centre had a fun-filled afternoon bowling as a group. This event is made possible through the sponsorship of the bowling alley by the Singapore Island Country Club and the support of the Singapore Disability Sports Council who facilitated the activity.

Our learners eagerly looked forward to the ses-

sion as this was their first-time learning bowling from an experienced coach. They learnt the right way to hold a bowling ball and how to determine their starting position all the way through swinging their arms to hitting the pins.

This target sport is not just a great opportunity for our learners to strengthen their gross motor skills but also an excellent opportunity for them to practise social interaction skills. Our learners cheered each other on when someone needed encouragement to do better and whenever their friend rolled a ball successfully and hit the pins.

*Contributor: Amy Soong, Assistant Training Officer*

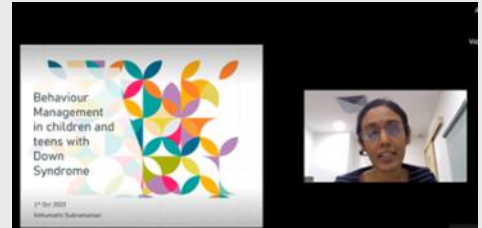


# FSS Webinar Fest

FSS organised a series of informative webinars with experienced occupational therapists from KidzOTC in October 2022.

## 1. Behaviour Management Strategies for persons with Down syndrome (1 October 2022)

Stress, family conflicts or neurological differences are some possible reasons that result in behavioural problems for individuals with Down syndrome. These may impact one's ability to self-regulate, express themselves, learn or navigate through daily situations. Ms. Inthumathi Subramanian dived deep into the possible underlying factors of these behavioural problems, sharing strategies and tips with caregivers to support positive behaviour change.



Occupational therapist Ms. Inthumathi sharing on behaviour management with our caregivers

## 2. An Overview of Neurodevelopmental Techniques for Feeding (8 October 2022)

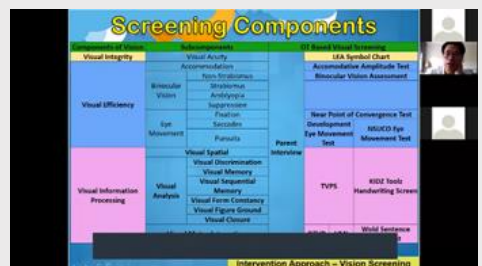
Children with Down syndrome often meet with feeding difficulties like stuffing their mouths and swallowing larger amounts of food without chewing. Mr. Chester Santiago introduced Neurodevelopmental Techniques (NDT) which could improve the feeding function and eating journey. He also discussed the complexity of feeding and shared tips on how to tackle the problem.



Mr. Chester introduced Neurodevelopmental treatment as a hands-on, client-centred approach that seeks to improve gross motor function

## 3. Optimising Visual Efficiency, Spatial Ability, and Information Processing (29 October 2022)

During the webinar, Mr. Alvin Chan provided participants with insights on developmental requisite capacities for the development of visual efficiency and visual information processing skills in individuals with Down syndrome. This enabled participants to provide early and effective pre-emptive intervention strategies to assist with the inevitable challenges.



Occupational therapist Mr. Alvin shares how visual processing skills are essential to our learning process

We hope that these webinars provided our caregivers with insights to better care for their children, and we look forward to bringing more of such informative sessions in 2023.

Contributor: Steffi Tjong, Executive, Family Support Services



## Ukulele & Us



There is no denying the Ukulele's charm; easy to play and fun for all ages and it envelops you with its rich and warm sound. On 19 November 2022, FSS organised a Ukulele Introductory workshop conducted by Mr Irwan Ramlan, a MOE-certified music educator at DSA Bishan Centre for 20 members, their siblings and caregivers.

The session kicked off with an introduction of the instrument followed by basic strumming movements and chords. The room was abuzz with excitement and siblings were seen helping each other with the ukulele.

The workshop ended on a high note with everyone happily strumming along to Katy Perry's song "Roar". Participants had a fun-filled session as it provided them with a great family and siblings bonding opportunity through music.

*Contributor: Steffi Tjong, Executive, Family Support Services*

## Grooving on Stage

The last quarter has been an exciting one for DSA's performing groups. After kickstarting their performance season at *Mystique 2022*, our performers were actively engaged in the following:

- 8 October 2022: Singapore Women's Association 45th Charity Gala Dinner (Dance group)
- 29 October 2022: Purple Parade 10th Anniversary (Dance and Zumba group)
- 12 November 2022: The Ireland Fund Emerald Ball (Drums group)
- 16 November 2022: An Extra•Ordinary Celebration (Dance group)
- 25 November 2022: Shaping Hearts (Drums group)

The performers brought on stage their best smiles, fun moves, and catchy beats which never fail to engage the audience and get everyone grooving along. Keep an eye on our performing groups as we bring more fun and exciting performances in 2023!



*Contributor: Amelia Sim, Senior Executive, Membership & Enrichment Program*

## Soaring into the Sky

It has been wonderful inviting the beneficiaries, their caregivers, and families from DSA to experience indoor skydiving with us on 10 October 2022 as part of iFly Singapore's 10th Anniversary Celebrations.

iFly Singapore actively engages charities for our annual anniversary celebrations due to firm beliefs in giving back to the society and is an advocate of indoor skydiving as an inclusive sport.

We are heartened to see beneficiaries and their caregivers from DSA so excited during the flight training and being able to overcome their fears and take that first step into the wind tunnel with the guidance of our flight instructors. With this indoor skydiving experience, we hope to firstly, give them aspirations that if they can fly, they can do anything in life as long as they believe in themselves. Secondly, let us show appreciation to the caregivers who have been caring selflessly and gone through a challenging time throughout the pandemic. Finally, see family bonds strengthen over this unique experience like no other.

Thank you for celebrating our anniversary with us.

*Contributor: Andrea Han, Marketing Manager, iFly Singapore*



*Thank you iFly for gifting us the experience of flying! We're so proud of all our beneficiaries who flew like superheroes. There is no better way of truly feeling free than soaring through the air.*

## It's a Sweet Treat



In the spirit of giving and spreading good cheer, Temasek brought our adult learners from Adult Education Services on a sweet adventure exploring the multi-sensory installations at the Museum of Ice Cream on 30 September 2022 and organised their perennial Christmas party at DSA Bishan Centre on 15 December 2022 much to the delight of our learners.

Volunteers from Temasek spent the afternoon feasting and playing games together with our learners. The party ended on a high note with a special performance by the learners to thank the volunteers. There is indeed no better way to celebrate Christmas than with our dear friends.

*Contributor: Alicia Ang, Senior Executive, Community Partnerships & Corporate Communications*



# 'Do Good' Fundraiser for DSA

28 October has always held a special meaning for us at YSG Marketplace (ysg.com.sg) ("YSG") as it marks the day of our official inception and we always celebrate it by first giving back to our society the YSG way – 'Do Good', YSG's annual signature fundraiser.

In this instalment of 'Do Good' between 28 to 31 October 2022, YSG raised over \$7,100 with the sales of products on YSG where 100% of the nett proceeds were donated to DSA. It was a privilege for YSG to be able to bring together our business partners to collectively 'Do Good'.

We were tremendously thankful for the generous sponsorship of products and services by 22 of

our Brand Partners for 'Do Good' and to YSG's customers, for the strong and unwavering support without which the fundraising would not be a huge success!

*"We are grateful that our annual fundraiser, 'Do Good', provided us with the opportunity to bring together our brand partners and YSG's customers on a common charitable platform. With this Do Good, we were very happy that the charity dollars raised would go towards supporting DSA's meaningful works and services."* – Mr Justin Chan, Head of Platform Services, YSG Pte Ltd

*Contributor: Apoorva Bansal, Executive, Marketing, Y-SG Pte Ltd*

Organised By In Support Of

Mr Justin Chan  
Head | Platform Services  
YSG Pte Ltd

Mr Yoo Anho  
Executive Director  
Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)

Do Good  
28 - 31 Oct

Our Brand Partners

## 'Harpy Hearts!'

On 28 November 2022, Nan Hua Ensemble organised our first collaboration with DSA. It was an engaging session filled with melodious performances, a hands-on segment with the harps and an arts and crafts session.

Our Harp Ensemble wanted to bring the joy of harp music to others. For most of our ensemble members, it was our first time interacting with persons with Down syndrome. We were very excited to be given this chance to step out of our comfort zones to communicate with them! Through this refreshing and unique experience, everyone had many takeaways.

We were surprised that some of them had a passion for playing musical instruments. Through this session, we learnt that not only do we have to be more patient, but also more enthusiastic and inclusive. At the end of this project, we have developed a more profound understanding towards people with special needs. It was a meaningful and fulfilling experience for everyone!

*Contributor: Ng Li Shan, Nan Hua High School*



## Serving with Joy



As we look back on the time spent together with DSA, all of us here at Starring SMU treasure the memory of months of joy and fun that we are proud to have been able to share with every one of our beneficiaries. We will never forget the smiles on your faces, the sound of your laughter, the taste of the mooncakes we shared and of course, dancing together at the end of every engagement session.

The past couple of months have been enriching beyond measure and we hope that we were able to have the same impact as you have on us. Starring SMU wishes DSA all the best in the future and hopes to see all of you soon!

*Contributor: Kynan Lam, Starring SMU*



# Wrapping up SSDB 2022!

This year's Start Small Dream Big (SSDB) collaboration with preschools has seen the highest number of projects yet. We are thankful that we were able to have physical talks at the Centres which proved to be a lot more fun and fulfilling as we get to share and interact with the children in person. They enjoyed 'meeting' friends with Down syndrome through the books that we brought.

Apart from the awareness talks, each school also participated in various activities such as virtual engagement sessions with our beneficiaries, creating learning resources for DSA's Children Education Services, and even a cardboard furniture painting project for our Infant Toddler Program.

We look forward to more meaningful and creative collaborations next year.

*Contributor: Nur Sulyanna Sumali, Executive, Volunteer Management & Community Partnership*



*Sulyanna giving an awareness talk at Sunshine Kids @ Woodlands*



*Students from PCF Sparkletots participated in the cardboard furniture painting project*



*Students from Sunflower Preschool @ Nee Soon East*

*"With the SSDB project coming to an end, I truly believe that this is just the beginning of children caring for their community, and you've played a big part in inculcating them with the value of kindness and inclusiveness!" – Ms Lee Yi Jun, MOE Kindergarten @ Wellington*

*"It was a genuinely memorable experience for the children at our centre to correspond with the learners at DSA and create the collage for the vaccination centre." – Ms Christlene Sylvester, Sunflower Preschool @ Nee Soon East*

# Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards 2022

Our heartiest congratulations to Jaspreet Sekhon and June Lin for receiving the Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards 2022 (UBS Promise)! They were among 15 recipients at the award ceremony held at the Istana on 1 December 2022 which recognises the achievements of persons with disabilities and motivates those with promise and potential to go the distance with their endeavours.

June (nominated by DSA) and Jaspreet (nominated by MINDS) are pioneering advocates of the 'Our Lives, Our Voices' (OLOV) Self-Advocacy program jointly run by DSA and MINDS since 2017. They had the opportunity to represent the disability community in co-delivering keynotes at "Having A Say Conference 2018" in Geelong, Australia and at the National Council of Social Service "We Are Able! 2018" conference. When June and Jaspreet were presented with opportunities to advocate their beliefs, they rose to the occasion and made an im-

pact in the community.

Though June and Jaspreet are now meaningfully employed, it did not stop them from upgrading their knowledge and skills through courses such as Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) course in Food and Beverage Safety, Hygiene Policies and Procedures, and most recently, Customer Service Skills by the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) organised by DSA.

June and Jaspreet have shown how they have been championing inclusion and empowering the community through their passion. Their aptitude to connect with their audience through their experiences and stories is commendable and inspiring. We wish them both every success in their future endeavours!

*Contributor: Amelia Sim, Senior Executive, Membership & Enrichment Program*



Left to right: Jaspreet Sekhon and June Lin  
Photos: Mediacorp Enable Fund



# Special Congratulations!



Mayor Denise Phua presenting the Long Service Award to Hafyz

Badrul Hafyz, a seasoned drummer started learning drums through DSA at the age of 6 and continued his passion and love for music by working as a School Support Assistant with Drum Prodigy Singapore Pte Ltd (DPSG). At the opening of DPSG's second branch, Hafyz was recognised for his dedication and hard work for five years of service.

DSA congratulates DPSG on the successful opening of their second branch on 3 December 2022 and to Hafyz for his achievement!

Contributor: Amelia Sim, Senior Executive, Membership & Enrichment Program

## DSA Staff Retreat

On 20 December 2022, DSA staff indulged in a pottery class as part of our annual staff retreat. During the three-hour session, staff learnt to shape clay on a pottery wheel. The session took a fun turn when the group had to participate in a game of musical chairs, working on each others' work while learning the essence of teamwork and inter-dependence. After the workshop, staff adjourned for a buffet dinner at Asian Market Café, Fairmont Singapore.

This staff retreat was initiated by the Board of Management to thank staff for their dedication to DSA and to create special memories for our colleagues to partake in fun team-bonding activities and dinner.

Contributor: Marcus Lo, Executive, HR & Admin



# Meet Nurul and Shana, Our Interns

## Nurul Najiha

My experience at DSA has been amazing. I learned a lot of things and was given many opportunities to express myself and my creativity. Being around the learners coupled with the positive environment made me look forward to coming to work daily, and it has also made me a happier person.

Interning at DSA has completely changed my mindset. I came here thinking that I would have to assist in the learners' Activities of Daily Living (ADL) but was proved wrong instead. Most of the learners are independent and are able to do most tasks by themselves.

During my internship, I had the opportunity to create obstacle courses for the gross motor sessions and facilitate the music lessons. The learners have shown me how creative and unique they are. I enjoy being around them with their positive and lively energy.

*Contributor: Nurul Najiha Bte Mohamad Amin, Intern, ITE*



## Shana Selvan



I am an art student interning for four months under the Adult Enhancement Program (AEP). I have grown to learn each of the 38 learners' personalities and capabilities over the course of my internship. They have taught me how to embrace different aspects of myself to forge deeper connections with them. They have opened my eyes in terms of art making, by which they have an unlimited flow of imagination and creativity, something I have been struggling with.

Spending so much time with them every day has grounded me and I am more in tune with my surroundings. Interacting with the learners has taught me how to communicate more effectively. I had no prior experience working with persons with disabilities, but I have learned so much about social service and was able to emphasise the importance of art in AEP. I also communicate with the learners through art, where we exchange ideas and skills. We have grown extremely close, and they will always have a special place in my heart.

*Contributor: Shana Selvan, Intern, NAFA*



Dear Friends,

Greetings to you from all of us at Down Syndrome Association (Singapore).

Your support will enable us to support our children and adults with Down syndrome through various educational, developmental and social programs with the aim to assist them to become more independent and lead productive lives.

Whether in big or small ways, we hope that you will continue to support our Cause. If you wish to make a contribution, kindly complete the donation form below and return it to us via post or at DSA Centre.

Once again, our heartfelt thanks and appreciation from the DSA Board of Management, staff and our community of persons with Down syndrome!

### DONATION FORM (NEWS/2022/12)

Name [as per NRIC/FIN/Registered Company]: (MR/MS/MDM/DR)

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact no: \_\_\_\_\_ NRIC/FIN/UEN/: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a contribution of:

A donation of \$50 / 100 / 500 / 1,000 / Others: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **By Cheque:**

Made payable to Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)

Cheque No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **By Credit Card:**

One-time       Monthly Contribution

Visa/Mastercard      Credit card no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**All outright donations are entitled to a tax deduction of 250%.**

Kindly drop off this form together with your contribution at our reception counter or mail to DSA Centre, attention to "Team CPCC".



Scan to Donate



TO BE THE CENTRE OF  
EXCELLENCE FOR INDIVIDUALS  
WITH DOWN SYNDROME,  
THEIR FAMILIES AND  
THE COMMUNITY.




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